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Human resources management reform

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 61/244.

Since the submission to the General Assembly of the previous reports of the Secretary-General on human resources management reform and on investing in people, considerable progress has been achieved in consolidating and expanding the human resources management reform programme on the basis of the resolutions and decisions of the Assembly.

The Secretary-General invites the General Assembly to take note of achievements to date in the implementation of the human resources management reform programme and the planned future activities set out in the present report.

* A/63/150 and Corr.1.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 61/244, by which the Secretary-General was requested to report to it at its sixty-third session on the implementation of the resolution.

2. The report focuses on actions taken in response to those requests. It also comments on actions taken pursuant to earlier reform initiatives the Secretary-General presented in his reports entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change" (A/57/387 and Corr.1), "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all" (A/59/2005) and "Investing in people" (A/61/255).

3. The report is presented in a format different from that of previous reports on human resources management reform (A/61/228 and Corr.1, A/59/263, A/57/293, A/55/253 and Corr.1 and A/53/414). While those reports were based on the 10 building blocks for the reform of human resources management, the present report is based on the areas that were addressed in the new human resources framework presented in the report of the Secretary-General on investing in people (A/61/255). Those areas are recruitment and staffing, mobility, career development and support, contractual arrangements and harmonization of conditions of service in the field and building leadership and management capacity. The report also contains sections on the questions of human resources planning and monitoring, national competitive examinations, performance management, administration of justice, human resources information technology and strengthening accountability for which either follow-up actions were requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 61/244 or significant progress has been made since the submission of previous reports on human resources management reform (A/61/228 and Corr.1) and investing in people (A/61/255). The Secretary-General is submitting separate reports on mobility, contractual arrangements and harmonization of conditions of service, and administration of justice, hence only a summary description of progress in each of those areas is included here.

4. The present report should therefore be read together with the reports of the Secretary-General on recruitment and staffing in the United Nations: strategy going forward (A/63/285), implementation of the mobility policy (A/63/208), detailed proposals on streamlining United Nations contractual arrangements: a way forward (A/63/298), amendments to the Staff Regulations (A/63/189) and administration of justice (A/63/132).

5. The Assembly also has before it the report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat, including addenda on the use of gratis personnel; consultants and individual contractors; and on the employment of retired former staff (A/63/310 and Add.1-3).

II. Background and overview

6. In his report on investing in people (A/61/255), the Secretary-General presented his vision for human resources management reform. He envisioned that the Secretariat of the future would be integrated, field-oriented and operational. To fulfil the Organization's complex and interrelated mandates in an efficient and cost-effective manner, he underscored the need for a workforce that is multi-skilled,

versatile and mobile, working across disciplines. He reiterated that the Organization would be known for its high standards of ethics, fairness, transparency and accountability and its culture of continuous learning, high performance, managerial excellence and respect for diversity. The report presented elements of the new vision for human resources management based on the following principles: flexibility to respond to evolving organizational needs; clear ethical standards; simplicity, clarity and transparency; merit-based recruitment and career development; compliance with geographical distribution and gender balance mandates; accountability of managers and staff; integration of Headquarters and field staff into a global Secretariat; and strong partnerships between managers and the Office of Human Resources Management.

7. Detailed proposals were presented to the General Assembly for its consideration addressing areas such as recruitment and staffing, mobility, career development and support, contractual arrangements and harmonization of conditions of service in the field, and building leadership and management capacity. The Assembly took note of the proposals and requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its sixty-third session on their implementation. It also deferred its decisions on a range of proposals, including roster-based recruitment, streamlining of contractual arrangements and harmonization of conditions of service, requesting the Secretary-General to provide additional information at subsequent sessions.

8. The progress made on the implementation of the proposals is provided below. Additional information requested by the General Assembly on proposals that it did not approve is provided in the above-mentioned reports of the Secretary-General on recruitment and staffing in the United Nations: strategy going forward, implementation of the mobility policy, detailed proposals on streamlining United Nations contractual arrangements: a way forward and amendments to the Staff Regulations for the sixty-third session. Some additional information has already been provided to the General Assembly on recruitment and staffing (A/61/822), on implementation of the mobility policy (A/62/215), on streamlining of contractual arrangements (A/61/857 and A/62/274) and on harmonization of conditions of service (A/61/861).

9. In December 2007, the Secretary-General requested the Deputy Secretary-General to lead a Task Force on Human Resources Management to propose solutions to the problems identified by the Ombudsman in the interrelated areas of recruitment and contractual arrangements, including geography and gender, and career development, including mobility and training. The Secretary-General also requested the Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management to lead a Task Force to Simplify and Streamline the Rules of Work Processes, with a view to introducing simplification, transparency and accountability in work processes and to identify operational bottlenecks and constraints for selected categories in the human resources function.

10. Each task force produced recommendations for action, which have been consolidated into one set of recommendations covering nine areas, including workforce planning, staff selection system/vacancy management, professional competitive examinations, managers' responsibilities and performance management, mobility, career development and training, payment of staff entitlements, pension terms and contracts and conditions of service. The Secretary-General approved the consolidated recommendations for action. While some recommendations could be

implemented under the authority of the Secretary-General, a number of recommendations would require consultations with staff or such entities as the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) and the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board and/or approval of the General Assembly. The recommendations requiring approval of the Assembly are provided in documents A/63/285, A/63/208, A/63/298 and A/63/189.

11. The recommendations requiring consultation with staff were circulated to staff representatives at all duty stations of the Secretariat. They were reviewed by the Staff-Management Coordination Committee at its twenty-ninth session, held in New York in June 2008. The Committee is the Secretariat-wide joint mechanism established by the Secretary-General, in accordance with the Staff Regulations and Rules, to advise him on issues of staff welfare, conditions of work and other Organization-wide personnel policies. The Committee expressed support for the consolidated recommendations for action and made a number of proposals with respect to the details of the recommendations. The Committee's proposals were accepted by the Secretary-General and are incorporated in documents A/63/285, A/63/208, A/63/298 and A/63/189.

12. Significant progress has been made in implementing reform in human resources management, and major achievements to date are as follows:

(a) **Human resources planning and monitoring.** Departmental human resources planning exercises, introduced in 1999 and currently in the fifth cycle, institutionalized regular discussions between the Office of Human Resources Management and heads of departments on major elements of human resources management, fostering recognition that managing people is a key part of their responsibilities. Biennial targets for key areas of human resources management, such as vacancy management and selection, geographical representation, gender balance, mobility, staff development, staff-management communication and employment of consultants and retirees, are established during the discussion. The Office of Human Resources Management launched a website to monitor progress in the implementation of departmental human resources action plans. Access to the website has also been provided to departments and offices to enable them to track and keep up to date on the progress of their own human resources action plans. The Management Performance Board oversees the performance of department heads in the implementation of departmental plans. Human resources management, together with programme and financial management, is covered in each senior manager's compact, which is the annual programme management plan established between department heads and the Secretary-General. The compact is also established between department heads (at the Under-Secretary-General level) and heads of offices (at the Assistant Secretary-General level). The compacts reinforce the responsibility and accountability of senior managers for the authority delegated to them. The monitoring of delegated authority in human resources management has been strengthened further with on-site monitoring of departments, offices and field missions. To undertake a more strategic, proactive and planned approach to human resources management, workforce planning is being introduced Secretariat-wide during the biennium 2008-2009;

(b) **Recruitment and staffing.** The current staff selection system was introduced in 2002, integrating recruitment, placement, managed mobility and promotion and delegating responsibility for selection decisions to department heads,

who are responsible for programme delivery and results. With the support of the Galaxy e-staffing tool, the system has speeded up the selection process and improved the efficiency and transparency of the process, compared with the previous paper-based staff selection system. Recognizing the need for a more effective and integrated system, the General Assembly approved the development of a new e-staffing system to replace Galaxy. The procurement process for the new system has been finalized, and the first phase of implementation is expected to be completed by the end of 2008. To enhance geographical representation and gender balance, a number of measures have been put in place, including provisions to strengthen adherence to the policies on the attainment of geographic and gender targets, the inclusion of elements on geographic representation and gender balance in the senior managers' compacts and the development of a more proactive outreach strategy and framework. Details of these measures are provided in section IV.B below;

(c) **Mobility.** The policy on organizational mobility was introduced in 2002 as an integral part of the staff selection system in order to develop a more versatile, multi-skilled and mobile workforce. As from 2002, occupancy time limits have been placed on all posts. The first round of the managed reassignment programme began in May 2007 and will be completed by the end of 2008. Mobility has been linked to career development, and supporting programmes have been implemented;

(d) **Career development and support.** The Organization has introduced a comprehensive career development policy stressing accountability at the organizational, managerial and individual levels. In order to promote shared values and common standards throughout the Secretariat, core values and core and managerial competencies have been integrated into all human resources systems, including recruitment and selection, staff development and performance management. The Organization's learning programme is based on the principle that building and maintaining the professional and managerial competence of staff is an important priority and that investing in learning is critical for the Organization's future. The programme has two main components. Centrally coordinated programmes, which are delivered across the Secretariat, aim to change the culture of the Organization, promote commitment to core values and build competencies. Decentralized programmes, which have been delegated to departments and offices, are designed to upgrade the substantive and technical skills of staff, including in the area of specialized information technology. An electronic performance appraisal system (e-PAS) based on best practices was introduced in 2002. E-PAS links individual workplans with those of work units and departments and promotes feedback and communication between staff and supervisors;

(e) **Strengthening leadership and management capacity.** The Organization developed a wide range of learning and organizational development programmes to systematically and progressively build management and leadership capacity. The People Management Programme was launched in 1996 in order to build the people management skills of staff in managerial positions. It has evolved into two programmes: the Leadership Development Programme for managers at the D-1 and D-2 levels and a Management Development Programme for staff at the P-4 and P-5 levels. To complement these programmes for individual managers, department-based managerial and organizational development programmes are offered, and programmes for women's leadership development were initiated in 2004.

III. Role of the Office of Human Resources Management

13. The Office of Human Resources Management continues to act as the central authority in matters relating to human resources. However, the evolving operational requirements of the Organization have required the Office to be more proactive and strategic.

14. The Office of Human Resources Management plays a major role in the following areas:

(a) Helping the Organization to align its human resources capacity to meet emerging challenges and supporting the establishment of new entities;

(b) Developing and maintaining the human resources management infrastructure through policy development and information technology;

(c) Building capacity to help managers to manage and staff to function to the best of their ability and monitoring performance;

(d) Introducing and sharing new ideas and good practices in human resources management;

(e) Acting as an advocate in matters relating to conditions of service and security, including in such areas as work/life issues, staff development and career opportunities;

(f) Providing advice and administrative services to departments and offices, managers and staff at large.

15. The General Assembly, in its resolution 62/236, took note of the new organizational structure of the Office of Human Resources Management, which was submitted in the context of the programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009. The new structure was planned to comprise the Office of the Assistant Secretary-General and four divisions, namely, the Policy and Strategic Planning Division, the Recruitment and Staffing Division, the Learning and Development Division and the Medical Services Division. However, the request for a D-2 post for the Director of the Recruitment and Staffing Division was not approved. Consequently, further modifications to the organizational structure are required in order to ensure alignment with functional priorities and maximum support for the Secretary-General's human resources reform effort and an equitable division of accountability and responsibility among the approved posts.

16. The modified organizational structure of the Office of Human Resources Management would comprise the Office of the Assistant Secretary-General, the Human Resources Policy Service, the Strategic Planning and Staffing Division, the Learning, Development and Human Resources Services Division, and the Medical Services Division. The modified organizational structure would enable the Office to exercise its overall authority for human resources management, generate maximum synergy among divisions, sections and units to provide better client services in the most effective and efficient way possible and innovate to meet new and evolving challenges in human resources management. The necessary organizational shift of resources will be reported in the context of the first performance report on the programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009.

17. The Office of Human Resources Management works in close partnership with human resources practitioners and managers throughout the Organization and in consultation with staff and staff representatives at all duty stations. It consults regularly with other organizations of the common system and represents the Organization at the sessions of the International Civil Service Commission.

IV. Major achievements to date and future direction

18. Human resources management reform is a process. Major achievements to date have helped the Organization to overcome significant challenges. However, many challenges remain and new ones have emerged. The Organization must therefore continue to strengthen its human resources management strategy and framework in order to fulfil its increasingly complex mandates. Simplifying and streamlining human resources management policies and practices, planning and developing an integrated, multi-skilled and mobile global workforce, improving conditions of service, employing modern communications and information technology and strengthening accountability are critical if the Organization is to achieve its goals in the future. The following sections cover major achievements to date and future directions in human resources management reform.

A. Human resources planning and monitoring

19. The overall aims in the area of human resources planning and monitoring are to implement a medium-term integrated workforce planning system and to develop supporting tools that facilitate meeting the Organization's human resources targets at the levels of individual departments and offices and the Secretariat as a whole.

1. Achievements to date

20. The Office of Human Resources Management has improved its monitoring of the main demographic indicators of Secretariat staff and continues to report on them annually to the General Assembly. The format and scope of reporting have been expanded considerably in recent years to include all staff employed by the Organization, including in field operations.

21. Departmental planning and performance with respect to legislative mandates in human resources management are underpinned by the human resources action plan system, which has evolved into an institutionalized system with recently enhanced elements of accountability. The system has been further strengthened by the introduction of the senior managers' compacts with the Secretary-General, aligning administrative and managerial goals of heads of departments and offices, including major goals in the area of human resources management, with their programmatic objectives.

22. The compacts and human resources action plans are important elements of the organizational accountability framework. The implementation of compacts and human resources action plans is monitored by the Department of Management, and progress is regularly reported to and reviewed by the Management Performance Board, chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General.

23. All 26 heads of departments and major offices prepared comprehensive compacts for 2008 after in-depth individual discussions between them and the Deputy Secretary-General. The Management Performance Board carried out an interim analysis of their implementation in June 2008. In order to foster transparency and accountability, the Secretary-General has published the compacts on the Intranet. The compacts include four objectives in the area of human resources management: to minimize the vacancy level, to achieve a 50-50 gender balance in the Professional and higher levels; to improve the geographical distribution of staff; and to achieve 100 per cent compliance with the performance appraisal system. Those objectives are supported by specified expected accomplishments and performance measures.

24. While the compacts are designed to address the four strategic issues in human resources management, human resources action plans constitute the biennial management framework that guides heads of departments and offices and programme managers in their human resources management responsibilities. The Office of Human Resources Management provides departments with guidance and assistance in reaching the established targets and with relevant statistical information, which facilitates the monitoring of progress.

25. At its meeting in July 2007, the Management Performance Board reviewed the implementation of departmental human resources action plans for 2005-2006. The Deputy Secretary-General informed heads of departments and offices of the areas where improvements were required in the next cycle, especially on the geographical representation and gender balance targets. The results were reported to the General Assembly in the report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat for 2006/07 (A/62/315).

26. The fifth human resources action planning cycle, covering 2007 and 2008, includes streamlined organizational human resources management goals, derived from the relevant mandates of the General Assembly. The action plans contain measurable targets in such key areas as vacancy management, geographical distribution, gender balance, mobility, performance appraisal, staff development, staff-management relations, employment of consultants and contractors and employment of retirees. Twenty-nine departments and offices are participating in the current cycle. In 2007, pilot human resources action plans were developed and introduced in six peacekeeping operations. The Office of Human Resources Management and the Department of Field Support will review the results of the pilot and introduce action plans for all peacekeeping operations by late 2008. The Management Performance Board reviewed departmental performance at mid-cycle and requested heads of departments and offices to take all necessary action to achieve their targets in the remaining months of the peacekeeping cycle until June 2008.

27. In 2008, the Office of Human Resources Management introduced an online "dashboard" system that provides monthly updates of departmental progress in the implementation of action plan targets and monthly progress scorecards. The system draws data from various databases, such as the Integrated Management Information System (IMIS), Galaxy and e-PAS. The online availability of data allows more transparency and empowers programme managers in their efforts to achieve the targets. Human resources action plan focal points in all departments and offices have been trained in the use of the system.

28. In accordance with the request of the General Assembly in its resolution 61/244, the departmental human resources action plans for the current cycle were published on the Intranet.

29. During 2007 and early 2008, in line with the request of the General Assembly in its resolution 61/244, a framework for workforce planning in the Secretariat has been developed. The Task Force on Human Resources Management, led by the Deputy Secretary-General, has identified strategic workforce planning as a key priority for departments. Accordingly, the Office of Human Resources Management has completed preliminary work aimed at associating all established posts with the appropriate occupational groups as a basis for subsequent mapping of posts and skills for the planning exercise.

30. The concept of workforce planning includes such elements as departmental workforce supply analysis and future workforce requirements, based on forecasts elaborated respectively by the Office of Human Resources Management and each department and office. The analysis includes projected staff movement due to the mandatory age of retirement and staff turnover on the supply side, and projected workforce requirements in line with the departmental strategic frameworks on the demand side. Comparison of demand and supply projections would result in workforce gap forecasts for the next four years, first at the departmental level and then at the Secretariat level, aggregated by occupational groups and grade levels. Gap analysis performed by the Office of Human Resources Management would be provided to departments and offices for the elaboration of practical action plans for meeting the projected requirements.

31. The recent acquisition of a new e-staffing talent management tool will support the implementation of strategic workforce planning Secretariat-wide. The tool will also be used for the introduction of a skills inventory. An online exit questionnaire for staff separating from the Organization was introduced in February 2007 to capture important information for workforce planning, which had not been centrally captured earlier. This information would be used in policy development in the areas of staff retention, gender balance and conditions of service.

32. Continuous monitoring by the Office of Human Resources Management of the manner in which departments, offices and field missions exercise the authority delegated to them in the management of human resources also provides important information for human resources planning and policy development. It aims to ensure that established regulations, rules, policies and procedures are adhered to and that performance standards and targets are met. It also enables the Office to provide timely support and guidance to departments and offices as required and to identify and disseminate lessons learned and best practices in human resources management.

33. In 2007 and the first six months of 2008, the Office of Human Resources Management organized monitoring missions to three peacekeeping operations and three departments and offices and prepared comprehensive monitoring reports. Monitoring of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon was conducted remotely owing to security concerns.

34. The monitoring missions have provided a number of important benefits: providing on-site training of staff with human resources capacity in departments and offices; sensitizing programme managers on areas of responsibility within the existing delegation of authority and on the implementation of global human

resources-related legislative mandates, including geographical distribution and gender balance of staff; and allowing the staff of the Office of Human Resources Management to acquire first-hand knowledge of the needs of departments and offices, including field offices and operations.

35. Feedback on the reviews and subsequent follow-up actions by the client departments and offices illustrate the importance of further contributing to strengthening the monitoring capacity of the Office of Human Resources Management. The Office is designing an electronic system to centrally capture monitoring activities and recommendations, which would allow more transparency, improved follow-up of implementation and ready access by all departments and offices to the inventory of best practices.

2. Future direction

36. The global workforce planning system, including a skills inventory, would be implemented to support the Secretary-General's vision for human resources management. This system, supported by modern automated information-gathering and analysis as part of the new e-staffing talent management support tool, would form the basis for the overhaul of human resources management practices. The workforce planning system would permit the integration of various elements of human resources management in the Secretariat.

37. The new cycle of the senior managers' compacts for 2009 and the human resources action plans for 2009-2010 will be introduced in January 2009.

38. The monitoring function of the Office of Human Resources Management needs to be expanded and made more systematic, as it currently focuses on the monitoring of those entities to which delegated authority has been granted. The Office is also adjusting its practices for human resources management monitoring in line with the larger accountability framework in the Secretariat. More attention will be given to covering the various aspects and levels of monitoring of the exercise of delegated authority in departments, offices and field operations and integrating them into all human resources management processes in departments and offices. This will enhance the transparency of human resources management, compliance with the established regulations, rules and policies and the consistency of their application across the Secretariat.

39. The monitoring framework will allow for ongoing self-monitoring by all human resources offices and practitioners, thus changing the way in which monitoring is conducted, from being reactive to being more proactive. It will also expand the choice of monitoring instruments available in the Secretariat. In addition to the routine controls built into the regular processing of human resources services, more automated instruments will facilitate the monitoring of implementation of senior managers' compacts and human resources action plans, monitoring through review of the human resources data recorded in the support systems and more general remote monitoring. On-site visits will continue to be used as an important monitoring tool.

40. The Office of Human Resources Management will seek ways to strengthen its capacity for the practical implementation of the monitoring framework.

B. Recruitment and staffing

41. The ability to attract, recruit, select and retain the best staff is at the heart of organizational performance and success. The United Nations needs a system that integrates field and Headquarters staff into one global Secretariat and realigns profiles with future needs. The overall aim is to build a high-quality, multi-skilled and mobile workforce with the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity and with due regard to geographic representation and gender balance.

1. Achievements to date

42. The Secretariat continues to make efforts to ensure that its human resources are deployed and managed in the best way to meet the multiple and complex mandates of the Organization. Significant progress has been made in moving towards streamlining and simplifying policies and processes for staffing the Secretariat. The paramount consideration is to ensure that the Organization meets the highest standards of efficiency, competency and integrity while striving to achieve the mandates on equitable geographical representation and gender balance.

43. Progress has been made in several aspects of recruitment, placement and promotion. In follow-up to the twenty-seventh session of the Staff-Management Coordination Committee in 2006, measures to strengthen the achievement of the Organization's geographic and gender mandates came into effect on 1 January 2007.

44. Some measures on staffing were proposed in the task forces' consolidated recommendations for action on human resources management, including roster-based staffing and simplification of eligibility requirements and reduction of the time taken to review cases. This is aligned with recommendations made in the report of the Secretary-General on investing in people (A/61/255).

45. The talent management project has made progress in addressing several aspects of the management of the Secretariat's human resources. These included the establishment of requirements for and the purchase of the new e-staffing talent management support tool as well as the development of a framework that integrates workforce planning, staffing, performance management and staff development.

2. Measures to ensure the application of the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity

46. Several measures are currently in place to ensure that the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity are verified in the selection of staff, in accordance with the provisions of Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations. Measures to recruit from as wide a geographical basis as possible have been further strengthened.

47. As mandated by the General Assembly, the selection of personnel for posts is done through a competitive process. For posts at the P-3 and higher levels, the staff selection system requires that candidates meet the published requirements for a post. As one of several measures to ensure that the best candidates are selected, vacancy announcements state the requirements, such as experience, education, languages and skills, as well as the competencies that candidates must have in order to be qualified and suitable to carry out the functions of the advertised post.

48. A competency-based interview conducted by a panel is required before a candidate can be recommended. This type of interview is designed to establish whether a qualified candidate has the required set of behavioural skills to be successful in the post. The requirement to conduct competency-based interviews was strengthened in administrative instruction ST/AI/2006/3 on the basis of an agreement reached at the twenty-seventh session of the Staff-Management Coordination Committee in 2006.

49. Heads of departments and offices are responsible for making selection decisions after the central review bodies have ensured that the process has been observed and that all candidates, both internal and external, have been evaluated against the requirements of the post. This ensures that only qualified and suitable candidates are recommended for selection to the head of a department or office. In selecting a candidate, department heads must give the fullest regard to internal candidates and the Organization's human resources objectives and targets as reflected in the departmental human resources plan, especially with regard to geographical representation and gender balance.

50. Some of the changes in the staff selection system agreed at the twenty-seventh session of the Staff-Management Coordination Committee that took effect on 1 January 2007 under administrative instruction ST/AI/2006/3 aim to strengthen compliance with the mandates on geographical representation and gender balance, as well as giving priority to serving staff and rostered candidates who were successful in the national competitive recruitment examination for vacancies at the P-3 level. Another change was to allow the Office of Human Resources Management to place candidates from the national competitive examination roster on P-2 posts that have been vacant for three months.

51. The performance appraisal system is an important tool in ascertaining that staff members meet the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity. Staff members are required to agree with their supervisors on goals to be achieved each reporting year, based on the workplans of the department and work unit. The performance of a staff member is assessed against the stated goals. The staff member's adherence to the Organization's core values and relevant competencies is also assessed by the performance appraisal system.

52. Generic job profiles were reviewed and revised in order to standardize requirements and ensure that uniform standards are applied. The generic job profiles are the basis for most vacancy announcements. The use of standardized phrases — including the indication that English and French are the working languages of the United Nations — from which a vacancy announcement and evaluation criteria can be built is intended to reduce the time spent on reviewing the texts of the vacancy announcements and evaluation criteria, particularly by the central review bodies.

3. Geographical representation and gender balance

(a) Equitable geographical distribution

53. In order to ensure recruitment on as wide a geographical basis as possible, several measures were put in place to strengthen adherence to the policies on the attainment of geographic and gender targets.

54. As from 1 January 2007, the revised staff selection system requires that:

(a) For posts in the Professional and higher categories subject to geographical distribution, if the head of department or office proposes to select an external candidate from an overrepresented Member State, the proposed selection decision must be justified to and approved by the Office of Human Resources Management prior to selection;

(b) For vacancies at the P-3 level, prior to the selection of an external candidate, that decision must be justified on the record to and approved by the Office of Human Resources Management.

55. In considering the proposed selection decisions in the context of the above provisions, the Office of Human Resources Management takes in account the geographical representation status of the countries of nationality of recommended external candidates, the status of the implementation of geographic and gender targets specified in departmental human resources action plans, the availability of qualified internal candidates and operational requirements of departments and offices.

56. Heads of departments and offices agree on a senior manager's compact with the Secretary-General that describes their overall goals for the reporting year. In addition, departmental human resources action plans provide a means of monitoring whether the department or office has met its human resources goals, including achieving progress towards attaining geographic and gender targets.

57. The representation status of Member States has improved over the past two years. In June 2006, 18 Member States were unrepresented and 19 were underrepresented, while in May 2008, 16 Member States were unrepresented and 17 were underrepresented. Further details can be found in the report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat (A/63/310).

58. As requested in section X, paragraph 12, of General Assembly resolution 61/244, efforts to achieve equitable geographical representation are continuing. This would require targeted outreach in close cooperation with Member States as well as non-governmental organizations, civil society, academic institutions and international organizations.

59. The lessons learned in a fast-track project to improve the geographical representation status of unrepresented and underrepresented countries were incorporated into the continuation of outreach efforts to reach the goal of equitable geographical representation. Several new measures were put in place to improve geographical representation. These include the creation of an Outreach Unit in the Office of Human Resources Management, one mandate of which is to identify candidates who would help the Organization meet its geographic targets. Outreach missions are planned for later in 2008 to certain unrepresented and underrepresented Member States and could be considered for additional Member States that are below the desirable range. Another measure taken to solicit candidates from unrepresented and underrepresented Member States is to link the websites of the United Nations Information Centres in those States to the Galaxy e-staffing tool. The national competitive examination has been successful in bringing about a positive change in the geographical representation status of certain Member States within range, as described below.

60. In 2008, in accordance with a recommendation of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, the Office of Human Resources Management undertook a detailed analysis of the requirements for improving the geographical representation of staff in the Secretariat for determining the Member States to which national competitive examinations were offered.

(b) Gender balance

61. In its resolutions 57/305, 59/266 and 61/244, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to increase his efforts to attain and monitor the goal of gender parity in the Secretariat, in particular at senior levels, and in that context to ensure that women, especially those from developing countries and countries with economies in transition, are appropriately represented within the Secretariat.

62. The Secretary-General has consistently emphasized his commitment to reaching the goal of 50-50 gender balance in the Secretariat. Disappointed by the slow pace in achieving this target, the Secretary-General organized a Policy Committee meeting on the status of women in the Secretariat at which a number of decisions were taken, including a decision to design and implement a forceful and forward-looking strategy under the leadership of the Deputy Secretary-General that would articulate the most effective ways of implementing the Organization's commitment to achieving gender balance, including gender awareness, policy implementation, monitoring and analysis of progress and ensuring accountability.

63. As part of this strategy, the Secretariat would institute a "gender balance scorecard" for each department that would include statistics on gender balance, information on the use of flexible working arrangements, functioning of the gender focal point system, selection of women from the roster and other relevant indicators, as well as innovative measures taken to facilitate the recruitment, promotion and retention of women. The scorecards would be reviewed by the Management Committee on a semi-annual basis as part of the assessment of performance and progress made by each department and office in reaching the gender targets outlined in the senior managers' compacts and in the human resources action plans.

64. In addition, the Secretary-General has conveyed a strong message to all managers and staff that urgent and substantial progress has to be made to improve gender balance in the Secretariat. Towards that end, programme managers are expected to use expected retirements at all levels, but in particular at the P-5 and D-1 levels, to increase women's representation, including by undertaking forward-looking workforce planning. Mindful of his own responsibility to appoint more women in senior positions, the Secretary-General has sought the support of department heads to provide his office with lists of candidates that include women qualified for posts at the D-2 level and above. In order to increase the pool of qualified women candidates, the Secretariat has established operational mechanisms for the implementation of measures outlined in the report of the Secretary-General on investing in people for systematic outreach to identify and attract qualified women candidates, particularly from the wider United Nations common system.

65. One of the changes in the staff selection system is that, if the head of a department or office who has not met the gender targets set out in the departmental action plan proposes to select a male candidate where an equally qualified female candidate is included in the list of recommended candidates, the proposed selection

decision must be justified to and approved by the Office of Human Resources Management.

66. In 2008, the Secretary-General will promulgate new terms of reference for the departmental focal points for women. The terms of reference clearly define the role and responsibilities of focal points to assist department heads in meeting gender targets. In conjunction with the focused outreach effort of the Office of Human Resources Management and activities of the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, the revised policy is aimed at ensuring that the departmental focal points have access to the necessary information and are able to play an effective role contributing to the advancement of women in the Secretariat by promoting transparency and equal treatment of staff, as well as the accountability of programme managers.

67. Targeted outreach activities will be carried out to identify and solicit female candidates for positions where gender balance has been weak or where suitable candidates have not otherwise been found.

4. Review of the staff selection system

68. The findings of a review of the staff selection system conducted in 2006 and described in detail in the report of the Secretary-General on human resources management reform (A/61/228 and Corr.1) are validated by a survey of managers on the staff selection system. At the time, one of the main findings was that rules and requirements governing the staff selection process were too complex and difficult to understand and that programme managers generally did not feel that the policies and procedures governing the staff selection system helped speed up the process. The complexity of the policies and the large number of applicants significantly contribute to the time required to fill vacancies. In addition, the information technology supporting the staff selection system was inadequate to process the volume of applications and was not sufficiently integrated with other human resources systems.

69. In the context of the acquisition of a new e-staffing talent management support tool and the need to review the staff selection system in the light of the recommendations made in the report of the Secretary-General on investing in people (A/61/255) as well as in the task forces' consolidated recommendations for action on human resources management, the policies and processes for the selection of staff in the Secretariat underwent extensive review.

70. As requested in General Assembly resolution 61/244, the Office of Human Resources Management conducted a global survey of programme managers in May 2008 with the intention of obtaining views on the present staff selection system policy and procedures. An electronic survey tool was developed and rolled out to managers throughout the Secretariat. The questions posed by the survey were intended to assess whether the current staff selection system encourages objective decision-making, whether the current policies promote competition among staff and ensure appropriate consideration for serving staff, whether the current system assists in achieving General Assembly mandates relating to geographical representation and gender balance, whether managers in general actively consider the geographic and gender mandates when making selection decisions, and on what basis they make selection decisions, taking all mandates and criteria into account.

71. On the basis of the responses received, it was ascertained that with respect to the staff selection policies and procedures relating to encouraging and promoting objective decision-making, there was an almost even split between those managers who believed that the policies and procedures of the staff selection system worked and those who did not. With regard to the responses relating to the issue of adequate consideration of internal candidates, the survey strongly indicated that managers were of the view that the system did fully consider internal candidates for positions. Furthermore, the majority of managers indicated that their senior managers strongly supported and encouraged improved geographical representation and gender balance in their selection decisions.

72. With respect to the tool and the question as to whether a sufficient number of highly qualified female candidates and candidates from unrepresented and underrepresented Member States were provided by the system, the responses indicated that the current system was not attracting the proper mix of candidates, demonstrating the need for more targeted and managed recruitment and outreach.

73. Most importantly, when asked which criteria were given the most weight in the selection decision, between nationality, gender and merit, merit was unanimously identified as the primary concern for programme managers.

74. In 2007, the average time between the posting of a vacancy announcement for a post in the Professional and higher categories to the selection decision was 162 days, which compares favourably with the previous figures of 174 days for the period 2002-2005 and 275 days under the previous system prior to 2002 (see A/61/228 and Corr.1). This shows a trend towards a shortening in the time required to fill vacancies under the current staff selection system. The reduction in time is due to the Organization's continued efforts to streamline work processes, train programme managers and members of central review bodies and provide better client services.

5. Central review bodies

75. The central review bodies play an important role in ensuring that qualified and suitable candidates are reviewed and recommended. They review proposals to fill vacancies made by the department or office concerned to ensure that candidates have been evaluated on the basis of the evaluation criteria and that the applicable procedures were followed and consider whether the proposal is reasoned and objectively justifiable on the basis of pre-approved evaluation criteria and whether the record indicates the existence of a mistake of fact, law or procedure, prejudice or improper motive that could have prevented the full and fair consideration of the requisite qualifications and experience of the candidates.

76. The General Assembly, in its resolution 61/244, called upon the Secretary-General to ensure the proper functioning and the effective role of the central review bodies across the Organization.

77. Pursuant to that request, in May 2007 the Office of Human Resources Management designed and implemented an Organization-wide survey of the members of central review bodies, representing a total of 380 staff members. The online questionnaire yielded a 37 per cent response rate. Findings and recommendations from the survey, along with lessons learned and ongoing feedback received from the offices away from Headquarters, laid the foundation for the

design and development of the content, scope and methodology of a new training programme for members of the central review bodies.

78. The two-day programme covers all aspects of the staff selection system, including policies, guidelines and rules of procedure. The programme is based on a case study approach and includes an ethics module.

79. The programme was piloted in New York and Geneva in November 2007. Subsequently, from December 2007 to July 2008, the programme was successfully delivered at eight major duty stations with established central review body activities, namely, Nairobi, Arusha, Bangkok, Santiago, Mexico City, New York, Vienna and The Hague. In 10 sessions, a total of 230 central review body members were trained. Because of security and other operational reasons, sessions in Beirut and Addis Ababa have been scheduled for September 2008.

80. The project was led by the Office of Human Resources Management in coordination with the human resources offices in Geneva and Vienna. Staff with various types of expertise, including those in the Ethics Office and the members of central review bodies in New York, have been consulted and involved in the development of the programme. A train-the-trainer approach was used in order to develop institutional and local capacity for maintaining and offering the programme at different duty stations on an ongoing basis. Four lead trainers at Headquarters offices and many more human resources practitioners at offices away from Headquarters have been trained to provide ongoing support in the organization and delivery of the programme as required at any duty station when the membership of the local central review bodies is renewed.

81. The programme was designed, developed and implemented at no additional cost to the Organization. Programme expenses relate mainly to the travel of the lead trainers and were covered under the regular travel expenses of the receiving office and the office of the lead trainer. The programme did, however, require staff time for its development and delivery, which is viewed as an important investment in the capacity of staff of the Office of Human Resources Management.

6. New electronic support tool

82. The current Galaxy e-staffing tool was developed in 2002 to support the staff selection system, completing the transition from a paper-based to a Web-based electronic system. It has made the circulation of vacancies more transparent and the application process more accessible. However, the increase in the number of applications in the absence of adequate tools for sorting and assessing suitability has placed a burden on programme managers and administrators. In addition, the custom-made technological infrastructure of Galaxy severely limits its flexibility and does not allow for modifications that are required to accommodate dynamic and evolving policy and operational needs. Noting these limitations, the General Assembly at its sixty-first session approved the development of a new e-staffing talent management support tool to replace the Galaxy e-staffing tool and related resources.

83. The Organization is in the process of configuring and implementing the new e-staffing talent management support tool, which would support the efficient integration of various work processes, including workforce planning and the solicitation, review and selection, assessment and career support of candidates for

positions in the United Nations. The new e-staffing talent management support tool would support the identification and review of candidates from unrepresented and underrepresented Member States.

7. Future direction

84. In the light of the recommendations of the task forces' consolidated recommendations for action on human resources management that were endorsed by the Staff-Management Coordination Committee at its twenty-ninth session, several measures would be taken to streamline and simplify rules and processes.

85. The process of creation and approval of vacancy announcements would be streamlined. Vacancy announcements and evaluation criteria would be standardized and issued as one document, based on generic job profiles. Such standardization would allow the elimination of the review of evaluation criteria by the central review bodies, thus saving a significant amount of time in the issuance of vacancy announcements.

86. In order to address concerns about achieving a quorum for meetings of the central review bodies, the number of possible members of the bodies would be increased and the possibility of having virtual meetings would be explored.

87. The task forces' consolidated recommendations for action on human resources management and the Staff-Management Coordination Committee endorsed the elimination of complex eligibility rules and the abolition of the system of 15-, 30- and 60-day time marks. All candidates would be reviewed at the same time after the vacancy has closed. The interests of serving staff for consideration in accordance with staff regulation 4.4 would continue to be safeguarded by ensuring that all staff members who apply for vacancies are reviewed and their evaluations are recorded. These measures would have the additional benefit of allowing resources currently used to determine eligibility to be used to assist departments and offices in identifying the most suitable candidates.

88. With a view to improving geographical distribution and gender balance in the Secretariat and to attracting staff from unrepresented and underrepresented Member States, an outreach strategy and framework would be developed with targets to achieve organizational goals. One P-5 post for the Outreach Unit in the Strategic Planning and Staffing Division of the Office of Human Resources Management was approved in resolution 61/244, and the Unit is being established. The Outreach Unit will work in an integrated manner with the planning in the Division as well as with all departments and offices in the Secretariat, and in particular with the Department of Field Support.

89. The Outreach Unit will carry out its work programme on the basis of an analysis of workforce planning with the goal of increasing the pool of candidates in occupational groups in which it is difficult to find qualified candidates willing to join the Organization. The outreach strategy would also include establishing partnerships with professional associations, governmental entities and non-governmental organizations for the sourcing of potential candidates.

90. The task forces' consolidated recommendations for action on human resources management included the establishment of cooperative arrangements with external candidate providers, professional and women's organizations and other entities. It also proposes to establish targeted searches in 2008 for candidates from

unrepresented and underrepresented Member States and for women candidates, with particular attention being given to the recruitment of women at the senior level. The Staff-Management Coordination Committee endorsed the proposal provided that the candidates identified in that manner are reviewed through the established recruitment processes.

91. The Outreach Unit would hold meetings with unrepresented and underrepresented Member States to discuss concrete measures to be taken to change their representation status. Outreach missions would also be carried out to select Member States.

92. The Secretary-General would continue to give special attention to the goal of equitable geographical representation and gender balance of staff in the Secretariat through the annual senior managers' compacts, the biennial human resources action plans and related provisions set out in administrative instruction ST/AI/2006/3.

93. Unexpected surge requirements would be met by using simplified procedures that could be met through selection from the existing rosters or from other sources. Unexpected short-term requirements or surge needs would be defined as any additional unforeseen temporary workforce requirement in terms of the number or skills of staff that are not available in the Secretariat caused by events beyond the control of the Secretariat (e.g. any unexpected political, economic, human rights, humanitarian, administrative or technical development requiring immediate action by the Secretariat). The duration would normally be from several weeks to 11 months.

94. As described in the report of the Secretary-General on investing in people (A/61/255), staff members recruited for short-term emergency or surge needs would be given a temporary appointment for a period of up to one year (two years in field operations). Staff selected for temporary appointments and who are subsequently proposed for longer-term employment would have to be selected through the existing competitive processes.

C. National competitive examination

95. The national competitive examination is an important factor in the efforts made towards achieving geographic and gender targets. The exam continues to be a successful means for bringing young professionals into the Organization on career appointments.

1. Achievements to date

96. Recruitment from the national competitive examination roster has been growing at a steady rate over the past three years: in 2004 69 candidates were recruited from the roster; in 2005 the Organization recruited 87 candidates; and in 2006 recruitment increased again to 92. The number of national competitive examination candidates recruited in 2007 was 96. This positive trend is expected to continue in 2008 and beyond.

97. Since 2002, with the exception of 2004, every year more women than men have been selected from the national competitive examination roster. In 2006, 52 women and 40 men were selected and in 2007, the figures were 56 women and

40 men. Several Member States have reached a more equitable representation status as a result of selections from the national competitive examination roster.

98. In its resolution 61/244, the General Assembly endorsed the proposal contained in the report of the Secretary-General on human resources management reform (A/61/228 and Corr.1) that the Office of Human Resources Management centrally manage the placement of successful examination candidates against P-2 posts and requested a full report of the outcome at its sixty-third session. In order to implement the proposal, section 11.3 of administrative instruction ST/AI/2006/3 gives the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management the authority to place candidates in P-2 posts subject to geographical distribution that, after a period of three months, have not been filled by candidates successful in a competitive examination. This measure supports the expedited placement of successful candidates on the roster from the national competitive examination or the General Service to Professional (G to P) examination.

99. The first exercise under section 11.3 of ST/AI/2006/3 was held in 2007. The Office of Human Resources Management submitted to departments a number of candidates from the national competitive examination roster, giving priority to candidates from countries that were unrepresented and underrepresented. A total of 8 selections were made from the roster for the 14 posts included in the exercise: 1 from a Member State that was unrepresented, 6 from 3 Member States that were within the range and 1 from an overrepresented Member State.

100. The average amount of time it took to complete the marking of the national competitive examination was reduced from 195 days in 2006 to 155 days in 2007. However, 155 days is still too long. The Office of Human Resources Management is examining ways to further reduce the time taken to mark the examinations and to provide administrative support for the examination process.

101. In 2008, workforce planning was used to schedule the national competitive recruitment examinations to coincide with the availability of posts. This should shorten the time that national competitive examination candidates are maintained on the roster.

2. Future direction

102. The Staff-Management Coordination Committee agreed at its twenty-ninth session to align the different processes used to place candidates against P-2 posts while observing the mandates on the number of P-2 posts available to G to P exam candidates. Candidates who are on the national competitive examination roster would be asked to express their interest in specific vacancies. At the same time, both serving staff members at the P-2 level and those who have passed the G to P examination would be able to express their interest in available P-2 posts. This measure would expedite the filling of such posts, as the P-2 vacancies would be announced to candidates as soon as they arose and candidates would be able to express their interest directly.

D. Career development and support

103. A strategic and comprehensive career development strategy is particularly critical in a body as diffuse and dynamic as the United Nations Secretariat. As the Organization moves to become more integrated and field-based and is given increasingly complex global mandates from Member States, it must be able to develop and retain leaders, managers and staff capable of a range of complex tasks, with specific skills and competencies gained from both field and Headquarters experience. A comprehensive career development policy also fosters retention and loyalty, while empowering individuals through continual self-assessment, learning and the setting of developmental goals.

1. Achievements to date

104. As noted in the report of the Secretary-General on investing in people (A/61/255), the Organization established a comprehensive career development policy that stresses accountability at the organizational, managerial and individual levels. Core and managerial competencies have been successfully integrated into all human resources systems, from recruitment to performance management. The career development programme of the Organization helps staff to understand and apply mastery of the competencies, as well as skills specific to their occupational group.

105. Over the past two years, the career training programmes offered through the career resource centres at each duty station, have continued to diversify and their number has increased. New workshops that assist staff in assessing their strengths and identifying their professional values have been added. Global train-the-trainer programmes have been initiated around the globe, from Addis Ababa to Beirut to Bangkok, strengthening local and regional capacity for the delivery of programmes. Simultaneously, new written materials have been produced and shared electronically, from a revised comprehensive career support guide to mapping materials that educate staff about offerings for all stages of their career development.

106. Skill-building workshops on the preparation of written applications and effective interviewing have been especially popular, receiving excellent staff evaluations, and participants have informally reported success in their mobility efforts as a result.

107. Informational sessions on peacekeeping mission recruitment and the staff selection system are consistently filled, helping to facilitate mobility by creating more awareness about human resources systems, policies and procedures across all levels of staff.

108. To support the increased emphasis on performance management and accountability for managers and staff, the career resource centres have developed and offered a comprehensive menu of lunchtime workshops on a range of relevant topics, such as setting challenging performance goals and giving and receiving feedback.

109. During the past two years, more than 5,600 United Nations staff members have utilized the career development support programmes offered through the career resource centres in most major duty stations.

2. Learning in support of career development

110. The overall training and learning policy is based on the principle that staff development is an important priority, as it represents a critical investment in the Organization's future. The responsibility for staff development is one that is shared jointly by the Organization, the manager and the staff member. In implementing the policy, the Organization makes available a wide range of developmental and learning opportunities for staff at all levels. Staff development programmes are geared towards supporting the Secretary-General's reform programme by contributing to organizational culture change and building the human resources capacity required for the future. The defined organizational core values and core and managerial competencies provide a solid competency framework for all developmental activities.

111. The Organization's staff development policy includes both centrally organized programmes to build organizational capacity and support organizational reform, and decentralized programmes whereby each year resources for the upgrading of specific substantive and technical skills are allocated directly to individual departments and offices on the basis of annual needs assessments.

112. Centrally organized programmes are aligned with the competency model, and new programmes are developed to build and maintain core values and core and managerial competencies, as well as to meet emerging organizational needs. A wide range of such programmes are offered to staff throughout the Secretariat under the categories of leadership, management, supervisory and organizational development; gender and diversity in the workplace; cross-cultural communication; conflict management and mediation skills; human and financial resources management; orientation programmes for new staff and junior Professional staff; career support programmes and career development workshops; career resource centres offering individual career counselling; General Service staff development programmes; competency-based selection and interviewing skills; staff welfare activities, including pre-retirement programmes, stress management programmes, HIV/AIDS orientation sessions, spousal support programmes and alcohol and substance abuse workshops; and information technology programmes, including online learning.

113. Courses in the six official languages are offered through the year in three 13-week sessions. In addition to the programmes leading to the language proficiency exam, programmes to meet specific work-related needs (e.g. simulation of international meetings) are available to support staff in their work. Departmental needs (e.g. report-writing for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support) are also addressed in specially designed workshops, and language maintenance programmes (e.g. advanced studies in Arabic) are designed to assist staff in the ongoing challenge of retaining their linguistic competence once they have achieved proficiency.

114. A wide variety of learning programmes have been developed specifically for support staff, and they are regularly reviewed, revised and enhanced. Their focus is on communication, interpersonal skills and efficiency. In addition, many other established programmes are open to support staff, including collaborative negotiation skills, project management, information technology and language and communications programmes in the six official languages.

3. Junior Professional staff

115. The five-day mandatory orientation and training programme for junior Professional staff has been expanded and is now held four or five times annually. The programme involves sessions on a range of human resources issues, including human resources reform, performance management and career development. It teaches communication and negotiation skills and includes panels with mid-career and senior career Professionals to enhance the participants' understanding of the work of the Organization and to provide advice and information about the range of United Nations careers. In 2007, the training was piloted successfully outside of New York, in Geneva.

116. The mentoring programme, an important component of the career development of junior Professional staff, has been strengthened through more systematic meetings, events and workshops for both mentors and junior staff. To date, approximately 650 mentoring pairs have participated in the programme. The mentoring programme, which is currently under review, will be rolled out in an enhanced, revised format in 2009.

117. To encourage and support mobility, networking meetings, informational sessions on different duty stations and peacekeeping missions and a range of other career development topics have been initiated in several locations and have achieved popularity and attracted active participation.

118. Finally, an online networking and informational site specifically targeting junior Professionals around the world was successfully developed and launched in 2007 to provide a global forum for information-sharing and networking. The Office of Human Resources Management also uses the site to share information about topics of interest, including training, managed mobility and work/life balance.

4. Future direction

119. There remains a significant gap between the resources available for learning and development and the needs identified to develop and retain a diverse, versatile international civil service that reflects geographical diversity and gender balance. As shown in table 1, the funds allocated to training and staff development activities have amounted to less than 1 per cent of staff costs in the past three bienniums. This ratio of less than 1 per cent is short of the minimum 2 per cent endorsed by CEB, well below the level of other United Nations funds and programmes and far from the average of organizations following best practices. A sizeable increase in resources for staff development and career support is needed to allow the Organization to strengthen the existing programmes and develop new ones to meet its changing needs and the requirements for strengthening staff.

Table 1
Training funds as a percentage of total staff costs

	Staff costs	*Training funds*	
Biennium	*Millions of United States dollars*		*Percentage*
2002-2003	1 588.3	15.6	0.98
2004-2005	1 858.5	15.1	0.81
2006-2007	2 087.8	20.6	0.99

120. Career models with potential career paths and crossover points would be developed along with occupational networks and systematic succession planning to allow for the swift identification of candidates and future talent gaps in specific areas. Additional resources would, however, be required in this effort. A new e-staffing talent management support tool would support such efforts.

121. The implementation of career models, with potential career paths and specific development requirements, would also support and strengthen recruitment, as it would be easier to identify high-potential candidates with the appropriate skill base, particularly in view of the upcoming surge in retirements expected over the next five years. It is expected that such models, once developed, would strengthen the ability of the United Nations to recruit and retain talent. Research has shown that young professionals increasingly look at possibilities for learning, growth and development when choosing an employer.

122. In addition, resources would be required to support an increased need for online career development programmes to reach an even wider audience and allow for more flexible learning across duty stations. In order to attract and retain talent, the Organization must provide staff with relevant training and development, rich experiences, flexibility, networks and communities and support through technology tools.

123. The learning management system would manage the activities of the learners, enabling staff to register for career development programmes that would be available across the Organization through the United Nations Virtual Academy. The Virtual Academy would support learner collaboration and provide self-paced courses, face-to-face workshops, online capabilities and cooperation with several international educational institutions, such as the human resources certification programme of Cornell University, which is currently in the pilot phase. The Academy would serve as the Organization's portal for online learning programmes, including the existing mandatory courses on ethics and the prohibition of harassment and the Senior Mission Administration and Resource Training Programme, which is managed by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support.

124. Through integration with the enterprise resource planning system and the new e-staffing talent management support tool, the learning management system would enable central compliance monitoring, which at present is not possible. In addition, it would track online, blended and classroom events and generate reports on course progress and completion and skills gap analyses.

125. Priority actions include:

(a) Continuing to offer and expand the menu of career workshops, self-study resources and counselling in career resource centres at all major duty stations to assist staff in making strategic career choices and professional development plans;

(b) Linking career advancement to continuous learning and performance evaluation through the development of mandatory training programmes, mobility requirements and performance appraisal reporting;

(c) Removing barriers such as contract type to allow access to a greater pool of talent, including more women;

(d) Creating occupational networks and career paths to help facilitate mobility, talent management and succession planning;

(e) Introducing systematically recognized professional certification programmes for key functional areas (e.g. finance, human resources, procurement, evaluation, etc.) to further professionalize the workforce and maintain and update essential skills and knowledge;

(f) Increasing coordination and collaboration between the Office of Human Resources Management, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support on key career development programmes, such as the Senior Leadership Induction Programme and the Senior Mission Administration and Resource Training Programme, and with the integrated training service of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations on the implementation of a training strategy;

(g) Providing more specific information on requirements and desired skills to move across functions, including those at the managerial/supervisory level;

(h) Expanding the pool of available mentors (at the P-4 level and above) by refining training, creating a more sophisticated database of potential mentors and enhancing the appeal of the programme;

(i) Providing continuing, ongoing support to offices away from Headquarters to ensure that consistent training and career development services are offered across duty stations;

(j) Completing an online language learning needs survey in 2008 to assess staff members' professional needs, with the content and formats of learning programmes being adjusted accordingly. An ongoing process of harmonization of language programmes in all Secretariat offices would continue to ensure that staff members moving between duty stations are able to continue their learning under equivalent standards and with similar programmes;

(k) Enhancing the junior Professional orientation and development programme on the basis of evaluations received from participants to reflect the reforms under way in the Organization. In addition, with increased funds, one follow-up session, scheduled six months after the first orientation programme, is planned, which would be designed to permit junior Professionals to keep abreast of the latest developments in the Organization, to follow up on their career action plans, to remain connected with one another and with the Office of Human Resources Management and to address any other relevant career development issues. In future, with the establishment of a Virtual Academy through the learning management system, follow-up sessions could be organized online;

(l) Developing online learning and career development programmes to provide staff with greater access to training and development opportunities and more flexible learning approaches through the ability to choose the learning modality that best fits the content;

(m) Maintaining close collaboration with the United Nations System Staff College regarding inter-agency initiatives for learning and career support.

E. Strengthening leadership and management capacity

126. The Organization's capacity to effectively meet current and future challenges and successfully drive organizational change depends to a very great extent on skilful leadership and management. In recent years there has been a dramatic expansion in the complexity of United Nations global operations and mandates, including in the areas of peacekeeping and peacebuilding, security, the Millennium Development Goals, humanitarian affairs and human rights, control of drugs and crime, climate change, food and other critical global issues. Increasing emphasis has been placed on leadership and managerial competencies, particularly since senior leaders, at the Assistant and Under-Secretary-General levels, are expected to perform a variety of substantive, political and representational functions in addition to their daily managerial responsibilities. Successful leadership and strong management of a multicultural and international workforce, often in hardship locations, are vital if the Organization is to fulfil its mandates and effectively utilize its human and financial resources.

1. Achievements to date

127. The Organization has implemented a wide range of learning and organizational development programmes designed to systematically and progressively build management and leadership capacity. The People Management Programme, launched in 1996 in order to build practical people management skills of staff in managerial positions, is now mandatory. More than 3,500 staff members have participated in the programme, including the majority of staff at the D-1, D-2, P-4 and P-5 levels. The programme has been redefined and refocused and from the latter part of 2005 was split into the Leadership Development Programme for D-1 and D-2 managers and the Management Development Programme for P-4 and P-5 managers. To complement leadership and management development programmes for individual managers, department-based managerial and organizational development programmes are offered, and specific programmes for women's leadership development were initiated in 2004.

128. The Organization offers a logical, progressive approach to managerial and leadership development, including:

(a) The Junior Professional Development Programme, for staff recruited through the national competitive examination and the G to P examination;

(b) The Supervisory Development Programme, for all staff up to the P-4 level with supervisory responsibility;

(c) The Management Development Programme, a five-day intensive residential programme that is mandatory for managers at the P-4 and P-5 levels who have supervisory responsibility;

(d) The Leadership Development Programme, an intensive residential programme consisting of two five-day modules spread over a period of 9 to 12 months, which is mandatory for all managers at the D-1 and D-2 levels.

129. Several new tools have been introduced to strengthen the leadership, management and organizational development programmes offered by the Office of Human Resources Management. "Profile of an Effective Department" and "Profile of an Effective Manager", which are based on the Organization's competency

framework, provide a common language, shared values and a shared understanding of what constitutes effectiveness at the individual and departmental levels. Within the organizational development framework, the profiles led to the creation of an assessment instrument in the form of a new online staff survey, the organizational effectiveness indicator, which provides departments with detailed indicators of their perceived level of effectiveness and efficiency. The indicators provide the department head and managers with the basis for action planning designed to lead to continued improvement. The profiles have also been used to develop an enhanced online 360-degree feedback instrument used in the context of the leadership and management development programmes.

130. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support, in a major initiative to strengthen their leadership capacity, have continued to implement and enhance a senior mission leadership induction programme for Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, Deputy Special Representatives, Force Commanders, Police Commissioners, Heads of Mission Support and other senior mission leaders.

131. In support of the Organization's core values, several mandatory online and face-to-face learning initiatives on the subject of ethics and integrity have been introduced. With the establishment of the Ethics Office, those programmes have been strengthened and new programmes will be developed to meet evolving needs. In addition to the above management, leadership and organizational development programmes, a variety of interrelated programmes and tools have been designed to enhance the Secretariat's leadership and managerial capacity. They include programmes on conflict resolution, competency-based interviewing and prevention of harassment and abuse of authority.

132. In August 2007, the Secretary-General convened a retreat of approximately 50 of the most senior managers at the Under-Secretary-General and Assistant Secretary-General levels in the United Nations system at the United Nations Staff College in Turin, Italy. The theme of the retreat was "a stronger United Nations for a better world". The Secretary-General intends to hold a similar retreat on an annual basis in order to improve and streamline coordination among the members of United Nations senior leadership and thus better address the Organization's current and evolving challenges.

133. As part of its commitment to the systematic strengthening of leadership throughout the United Nations, the Secretariat participated in the pilot project on the inter-agency senior management network leadership development programme in late 2007. The programme is a key component of the proposal for the establishment of a Senior Management Network, which was endorsed by CEB. The system-wide programme was developed by the Staff College, in close collaboration with the organizations of the system. The programme, based on a set of core competencies developed for the Senior Management Network, is intended to build managerial and leadership capacity across the system; foster shared standards and approaches as well as a common managerial culture; contribute to a more professional management function; and promote inter-agency coordination and mobility. The Staff College, in coordination with the members of the system, is reviewing the results of the pilot project and making recommendations for future programmes.

2. Future direction

134. The Secretariat will continue its support for the creation of a Senior Management Network in the United Nations system and for the revision and implementation, under the coordination of the Staff College, of a senior management network programme, which would be the flagship of leadership development training in the United Nations system.

135. The existing management and leadership development programmes would be reviewed and enhanced to include features that increase learning and overall impact (e.g. additional coaching, programmed assignments and assessment). At the same time, if the necessary resources are provided, the programmes would be provided on a widely extended systematic basis to the management and leadership in field missions, including peacekeeping and special political missions, and field offices of other departments and offices.

136. There is a need to invest in identifying and grooming future leaders, which would entail, for example, introducing a programme for junior or emerging managers and for high-potential professionals at the P-2 to P-4 levels so as to better prepare them to assume management responsibilities and to strengthen the culture of effective management by focusing on those who would be the Organization's leaders in the next decades.

137. This process would also logically include the systematic use of assessment centres to ensure that the Organization appoints, develops and promotes the most effective senior managers and leaders. The assessment centre process would provide comprehensive feedback on a wide range of candidates' critical abilities as well as their personal style. This would include analytical capacity for decision-making and problem-solving as well as their style and level of effectiveness in interaction with peers, clients, supervisees and others. The results would offer both indications of overall, potential and priority areas for development.

F. Performance management

138. The goals of the performance appraisal system are to ensure that the United Nations and all its departments, offices, teams and staff members effectively coordinate to improve the delivery of programmes mandated by the General Assembly and to optimize performance at all levels of the Organization while enhancing responsibility and accountability, and to implement a fair, equitable, transparent and measurable electronic system of performance management for all staff members throughout the Secretariat in support of a results-based culture that recognizes and rewards excellent performance and adequately addresses underperformance.

1. Achievements to date

139. In December 1993, the General Assembly, in its resolution 48/218 A, called very decisively for the "establishment of a transparent and effective system of accountability and responsibility". It further specified that the system should include performance evaluation for all officials. The Assembly approved the proposals of the Secretary-General for implementation of a new performance appraisal system

and requested that efforts be made to ensure that the system was implemented with effect from 1 April 1996.

140. The Performance Appraisal System, a key management tool for the Organization, is in place to align the work of all staff members with the goals of the United Nations and allow managers to monitor the performance of each member of their team. By clarifying individual goals at the beginning of the period, keeping performance on track through ongoing dialogue and a midpoint review and evaluating performance at the end of the cycle, accountability and individual responsibility are promoted.

141. Since its introduction, the PAS has been revised twice, in 1998 and 2001. The latest revision resulted in the introduction of an electronic system (e-PAS) incorporating substantive and technological innovation for which a UN 21 Award was received in 2003. The e-PAS was introduced progressively across the Organization and became mandatory as from 1 April 2003.

142. The latest revision incorporated the United Nations core values and competencies and linked them to work goals, allowing staff and managers to plan for development and learning, which is critical for future growth and cultural change. There is also a provision for self-assessment by the staff member, comments by the staff member on the supervision received, strengthened links between performance management and career development and enhanced accountability measures.

143. An intersessional working group of the Staff-Management Coordination Committee was established in June 2007 to review e-PAS in its entirety, including feedback mechanisms, consistent application and ways to recognize and reward above-average performance. In their discussions, staff and management displayed broad agreement on a number of issues, including but not limited to ongoing difficulties with the current rating system, entailing differing rating distributions among departments and offices; difficulties in accessing the e-PAS electronic tool; the need to provide adequate additional mandatory training to staff and management in order to ensure a better application of the performance management system; and the need to hold managers and staff accountable for accurate e-PAS compliance.

144. Following the discussions, the Staff-Management Coordination Committee at its twenty-ninth session agreed that the intersessional working group should continue its work and present a comprehensive proposal for a new performance appraisal system at the next meeting of the Committee. At the same time, the Office of Human Resources Management agreed to take measures to improve the electronic tool and to improve compliance and accountability by issuing a new administrative instruction thereon.

2. Staff development programmes to support performance management

145. As part of the overall effort to change the organizational culture, the Office of Human Resources Management has created a new development programme designed to progressively refine the skills of managers and staff so that they may more reliably and effectively utilize the performance management system. This new development programme aims to improve individual, team and organizational performance by teaching such fundamental elements as setting specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound goals and giving and receiving constructive

feedback and through the inclusion of strategic learning and development plans to facilitate a staff member's career development for each appraisal period.

146. A wide range of creative learning and organizational development programmes have been designed to systematically and progressively build management and leadership capacity in performance management. The performance management programme for leaders, for example, which was rolled out during 2006-2007, involves structured informational sessions and full-day training sessions on performance management. These are held on a regular basis and have progressively been rolled out at Headquarters and offices away from Headquarters. The concepts are also included in managerial development programmes, including the Leadership and Management Development Programmes, the Supervisory Development Series (six workshops) and Coaching for Improved Performance.

147. In addition, a new performance management series (nine workshops) was designed to engage staff and managers in a creative, flexible way through lunchtime workshops. Topics include developing meaningful goals aligned with departmental workplans, conducting regular ongoing discussions and reviews throughout the year, identifying and addressing development needs and motivating staff for high performance. The workshops are offered for small groups through the career resource centres at Headquarters and offices away from Headquarters, where self-study material is also available for staff and managers. Finally, e-PAS hands-on training sessions are held for groups and individuals on request, often for a specific department, team or unit.

148. All newly recruited staff members, in their orientation course, participate in a module that reviews the alignment of individual performance with values and competencies.

3. Implementation of the Performance Appraisal System Secretariat-wide

149. In accordance with administrative instruction ST/AI/2002/3, all departments and offices of the Secretariat and most field missions moved to e-PAS. Monitoring of e-PAS compliance and rating trends indicate that overall, compliance continues to be maintained at 80 per cent Secretariat-wide. Over the period 2004-2007, the compliance ratio and distribution of ratings were as shown in table 2.

Table 2
Performance Appraisal System rating and compliance statistics

	Rating (percentage)[a]						
Period	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*Compliance ratio (Percentage)*	*Number of staff completing PAS*
2004/05	9.00	40.90	49.30	0.80	0.00	83	15 145
2005/06	8.80	40.50	49.80	0.79	0.02	80	18 280
2006/07	8.70	40.80	49.89	0.55	0.05	82	20 862

[a] The e-PAS ratings are as follows:
1: Consistently exceeds performance expectations
2: Frequently exceeds performance expectations
3: Fully meets performance expectations
4: Partially meets performance expectations
5: Does not meet performance expectations

150. The differentiation of performance has improved over the past five years, with 50 per cent of the staff being rated as fully meeting performance expectations and approximately 10 per cent of staff receiving the highest rating. The number of departments and offices rating their staff significantly above the Organizational norm continues to decline. Staff not meeting expectations comprise less than 10 per cent of the total, which is within the norm.

151. An e-PAS help desk, established in 2003, continues to work to solve any problems that individual staff may experience and to gather feedback about the system to aid in its continuous improvement. The feedback system shows that as at 31 March 2008, 23,500 queries had been answered since 2003. One and one-half posts in the Office of Human Resources Management support the e-PAS help desk. Despite the limited resources, the help desk strives to respond to each staff member within 24 to 48 hours of each request.

4. Monitoring and reporting

152. Departmental compliance with PAS is monitored through senior managers' compacts and human resources action plans. Systematic monitoring, reporting and support have been provided to departments and offices with the goal of increasing the timely compliance of e-PAS to 100 per cent. Monthly status reports on overall compliance have also been submitted to heads of departments and offices. Work is under way to provide each department and office with a facility to monitor its own compliance on a regular basis. This would enable more consistent and punctual compliance with e-PAS by departments and offices at each step of the process.

5. Future direction

153. As agreed at the twenty-ninth session of the Staff-Management Coordination Committee, the Office of Human Resources Management will continue ongoing work aimed at improving PAS. These improvements will include improving access for local administrations to allow them to run monitoring reports, enabling staff and managers to assess the career development plans as they relate to training needs and priorities of the Organization and individual departments and offices, and developing a systematic approach to the year-end evaluation process, including clarifying and strengthening the role of the departmental management review committees. The latter will result in improved consistency of staff assessments, ratings and overall compliance. Moreover, the committees could help to ensure that PAS is aligned to programmatic workplans through regular communication to staff regarding the objectives and priorities of each department and office.

154. A "reverse appraisal" system will also be considered in the framework of agreements reached at the Staff-Management Coordination Committee in June 2008 to allow supervisees to provide feedback on the supervision received and enable second reporting officers to use such feedback in the discussion to improve the performance of managers.

155. Administrative instruction ST/AI/2002/3 on the performance appraisal system would be amended taking into account changes that have been suggested by departments and offices to improve compliance and accountability.

156. As endorsed by the Staff-Management Coordination Committee, performance management training for supervisors would be made mandatory, and sufficient

funding should be made available to expand the training to all e-PAS users at Headquarters and offices away from Headquarters, including peacekeeping missions.

157. The Office of Human Resources Management would continue to support managers in understanding their role in supporting the development of their staff. Ways to integrate learning and training needs within the respective development plan of e-PAS for each staff member would continue to be part of the performance management training. This improvement would enable managers and the Office of Human Resources Management to identify training needs, plan future training requirements and monitor progress.

158. The Office of Human Resources Management would continue to upgrade e-PAS technology to make the tool more user-friendly and to better support field operations. E-PAS would also be integrated in the new e-staffing talent management support tool.

159. The accountability of department heads for PAS compliance would continue to be reinforced through compacts and human resources action plans. The Office of Human Resources Management would continue its efforts to systematically monitor the status of e-PAS compliance and take note of punctual implementation.

160. Enhancing the reporting tool's accessibility to departments and offices to facilitate their monitoring role continues to be a priority. Regular and continuous self-monitoring and reporting would enable departments and offices to detect possible bottlenecks in the process. Therefore, appropriate action could be taken to reach 100 per cent compliance in a timely fashion.

161. As endorsed by the Staff-Management Coordination Committee, the Office of Human Resources Management would continue to build on existing mechanisms and develop new and creative ways to reward, recognize and motivate staff. A system of recognition is expected to be developed during the current biennium, and once it is in place, a communication and implementation strategy will be launched throughout the Secretariat, serving to confirm that the Organization places a great deal of value on each staff member's contributions and accomplishments.

G. Mobility

162. One of the critical elements of the Secretary-General's vision for more effective human resources management is an integrated approach to mobility in order to create a more versatile, multi-skilled and mobile workforce capable of fulfilling both the non-routine requirements of Headquarters programmes and the complex mandates of field operations. This approach is also envisaged to improve the effectiveness of the Organization and to foster the skills and capacity of staff. The General Assembly reviewed the Secretary-General's proposals presented in his report on investing in people (A/61/255). In its resolution 61/244, the Assembly encouraged the Secretary-General to continue to make progress in the area of mobility. In recognition of the increased workload, it approved two Professional posts at the P-4 level in the Office of Human Resources Management. In this context, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report at the main part of its sixty-second session on clear indicators, benchmarks, number of staff, timelines and criteria for the implementation of mobility policies, taking into account the

needs of the Organization and ways to protect the rights of staff in the context of the system of administration of justice. The Secretary-General responded to the Assembly in his report on implementation of mobility policy (A/62/215).

163. In the same resolution, the General Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its sixty-third session on the implemented phases of the mobility policy, along with projections for the envisaged remaining phases and an assessment of the relevant administrative and management issues. Those issues are addressed in the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the mobility policy (A/63/208), together with observations and recommendation on the way forward.

H. Contractual arrangements and harmonization of conditions of service

164. As part of the new human resources framework presented in his report on investing in people (A/61/255), the Secretary-General submitted a proposal on new contractual arrangements. The General Assembly considered the proposal and in its resolution 61/244 requested the Secretary-General to submit a detailed road map on the implementation of the proposed contractual arrangements, including eligibility criteria. Pursuant to that request, the Secretary-General submitted reports on streamlining United Nations contractual arrangements (A/61/857 and A/62/274). The Assembly deliberated on those proposals at its resumed sixty-second session and, in resolution 62/248, decided to continue its consideration of the proposals, including proposals relating to field operations, at the main part of its sixty-third session with a view to the implementation of the new arrangements and conditions on 1 July 2009. Additional information is provided in a separate report (A/63/298) to facilitate the review of the contractual arrangements and conditions of service by the Assembly during its sixty-third session.

165. The General Assembly, at its sixty-first session, considered the proposals of the Secretary-General on the harmonization of conditions of service presented in his report on investing in people. In its resolution 61/244, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a comprehensive report on the issue, including possible financial implications. In response to that request, the Secretary-General submitted a comprehensive report (A/61/861) on the harmonization of conditions of service in the field, in which he also addressed the observations of the International Civil Service Commission on the question (A/61/30/Add.1). The Assembly, in its resolution 62/248, decided to continue its consideration of the proposals.

166. The General Assembly has before it the report of the Secretary-General on amendments to the Staff Regulations (A/63/189), which were prepared as an initial step towards streamlining contractual arrangements and harmonizing conditions of service. Should the Assembly approve the proposals on streamlining of contractual arrangements and on the amendments to the Staff Regulations during the main part of its sixty-third session, the Secretary-General will prepare the full text of new single-series Staff Rules, which would become effective 1 July 2009.

I. Administration of justice

167. In its resolution 61/261, the General Assembly decided to establish a new, independent, transparent, professionalized, adequately resourced and decentralized system of administration of justice. In its resolution 62/228, the General Assembly provided the basic framework of the new system, including resources, and decided that the system would be implemented as from 1 January 2009. The Secretary-General provided the Assembly with additional information (A/62/748 and A/62/782), and is providing further information in a separate report (A/63/132) for consideration at the sixty-third session.

J. Human resources information technology

168. The General Assembly, in its resolution 61/244, approved the new e-staffing talent management support tool project and allocated resources for 2007 to initiate the project, the procurement process for which was initiated early that year. After an intensive procurement process with technical and commercial evaluations, a contract with the selected vendor has been completed. The new e-staffing talent management support tool will be configured and implemented in phases during the second half of 2008 and 2009. The first phase includes building functionalities relating to the staff selection system and the performance management system, migrating data from Galaxy, e-PAS and other legacy systems and developing a career website.

169. As proposed in the report of the Secretary-General on investing in people (A/61/255), a learning management system is necessary to globally manage learning resources and provide access. A series of business process re-engineering workshops in the areas of learning and development were conducted with learning managers from each office away from Headquarters and several departments and offices in New York during the first quarter of 2008. The outcome of the workshops in the form of a statement of work document summarizing the requirements for the learning management system has been finalized and reviewed by all major stakeholders. The statement of work has been submitted to the Procurement Service for the acquisition of software and services. The learning management system would be developed as a central technical component of the United Nations Virtual Academy. The Academy would support learner collaboration and provide self-paced courses, face-to-face workshops, online capabilities and cooperation with several international educational institutions. It would serve as the central repository for organizational experience and best practices and provide learning tools and curricula for staff development in all occupational groups and for staff at all levels in the Secretariat. The learning management system would eventually be integrated with the enterprise resource planning system and the new e-staffing talent management support tool.

170. Requests for general information systems help desk support have been increasing with the growing number of users globally on various human resources information systems and services, such as IMIS, Galaxy and other human resources information systems. In June 2008, the Office of Human Resources Management implemented an online tool (My HR Online) to manage the incoming help desk requests in a single system working in conjunction with a call centre operation. This tool allows staff members to submit and track their requests for help desk support

related to human resources information technology and follow up on their status. The system automatically routes the requests to the appropriate queue and the focal points assign the tasks to their respective teams.

171. Also in resolution 61/244, the General Assembly approved the development of a new data repository and allocated resources for 2007 to initiate the project. To date, the architecture for data repository and software acquisition have been completed. In order to enhance the reliability and timeliness of the information required by the Secretary-General, senior managers, legislative bodies and other United Nations entities, it is planned to implement a human resources data depository that would serve as the official source of data for human resources. To develop self-service capacity for users and improve the decision-making capacity of management, it is essential to have a single data repository with data quality and integrity. The single data repository, which would cover staff in all duty stations and field missions, would enable managers and administrators to have instant access to most of the essential human resources information on their desktop. The development of the new data repository will be completed in the second quarter of 2009.

K. Strengthening accountability

172. In its resolution 61/244, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to present proposals for enforcing the implementation of human resources policies and action plan objectives to improve accountability and responsibility in the reform of human resources management as well as the monitoring and control mechanisms and procedures, and to report thereon at its sixty-third session.

173. In his report on the accountability framework, enterprise risk management and internal control framework, and results-based management framework (A/62/701), the Secretary-General proposed a comprehensive accountability architecture comprising the three key elements of institutional and personal accountability: performance, compliance and integrity. Those three elements reflect the Organization's commitment to achieving results while respecting its regulations, rules and ethical standards. The new architecture would build on the existing accountability framework, under which the Secretary-General delegates authority to his senior managers to implement General Assembly mandates and achieve the expected results within a given resource level. The new architecture also captures the important relationship between transparency and accountability, which are mutually reinforcing concepts, the existence of which is a prerequisite for the effective, efficient and equitable management of the Secretariat.

174. As described in detail in section IV.A above, the biennial human resources action plans agreed upon by heads of departments and offices and the head of the Office of Human Resources Management represent an important element of the accountability framework. They contain measurable targets associated with the legislative mandates in the vital area of human resources management. Twenty-nine departments and offices are participating in the current fifth cycle (2007-2008) of the human resources action plan, which incorporates improved methodology, streamlined measurement of progress, automated metrics and more efficient supporting tools to monitor progress.

175. Monitoring of human resources action plan performance was significantly improved in 2008 with the implementation of an Intranet-based electronic tool that provides user-friendly performance tracking of the targets in human resources action plans by both the Office of Human Resources Management and the relevant department or office. A monthly updated departmental scorecard gives the latest update on human resources action plan performance. Those recent developments have increased transparency in the performance of departments and offices vis-à-vis their action plans, which is an essential condition for accountability.

176. The enhanced transparency allows improved monitoring of the situation. At the most senior level of the Organization, departmental human resources action plan performance is now regularly reviewed by the Management Performance Board, chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General. Based on the results of such reviews, appropriate recommendations for improved performance are sent to heads of departments and offices by the Deputy Secretary-General. The human resources action plan tool has now attained a level of managerial visibility and sensitivity that facilitates increased and more rapid results.

177. Monitoring of how departments and offices exercise the human resources management authority delegated to them is the cornerstone of internal control in this area within the accountability framework. Monitoring includes compliance control for established rules and procedures, departmental capacity evaluation, elaboration of improvement recommendations, proposals for policy development and dissemination of best practices. The monitoring concept and framework continue to evolve, contributing to the improvement of monitoring practices, which consistently receive positive feedback from the client departments and offices. Standard monitoring terms of reference and techniques of preparation for the monitoring reviews have been introduced and are effectively applied by the Office of Human Resources Management.

178. While on-site monitoring visits continue to be the main strategy, the Office of Human Resources Management has developed and successfully tested in a peacekeeping operation a new remote monitoring technique. While remote monitoring misses the essential personal interaction between monitors and responsible departmental representatives and immediate access to relevant files, documents and information, it allows an acceptable quality of review in some monitoring areas, if organized well. This option may be used in situations where security is of concern or increased monitoring is required, provided that appropriate resources are available.

179. In addition, the concept and tools for departmental self-monitoring in the area of human resources management are being tested to complement standard monitoring activities of the Office of Human Resources Management. Once introduced globally, self-monitoring will allow for more direct and immediate review of departmental activities, thus contributing to capacity-building, continuous monitoring and ultimately more effective and efficient management of the Organization's human resources.

180. Future priorities include developing and refining meaningful metrics to contribute to the Secretariat's mission and strategic goals. The Secretary-General intends to:

(a) Contribute to the development of the Organization's accountability framework in respect of human resources management issues;

(b) Harmonize human resources management authority with that of financial delegation of authority;

(c) Implement departmental and Secretariat-wide workforce planning, based on the evaluation of the gap between the existing human resources and their predictable evolution on the one hand and the forecasted resource implications of departmental mandates on the other;

(d) Develop departmental succession planning based on workforce action plans;

(e) Develop departmental and Secretariat workforce scorecards to facilitate the effective review and monitoring of workforce planning;

(f) Ensure the integration of workforce planning in the new e-staffing talent management support tool;

(g) Further streamline metrics and reporting tools in the forthcoming human resources action plan cycle for 2009-2010;

(h) Implement the human resources monitoring framework, including self-monitoring, into a global and comprehensive document;

(i) Develop techniques, procedures and tools for remote monitoring of the exercise of delegated human resources management authority.

L. Health-care services of the United Nations

181. The Office of Human Resources Management provides a comprehensive occupational health service to United Nations staff system-wide, including health promotion, clinical care and travel health services, and provides advice to the administration of the United Nations and its funds and programmes, in particular to the Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and Field Support, on clinical and medico-administrative issues. In addition, it provides medical advice to United Nations medical staff and facilities system-wide, coordinating the implementation of United Nations policies on medical and health care.

182. A typical annual workload encompasses 35,500 medical examinations and consultations, 6,700 immunizations, 17,220 diagnostic tests (e.g. laboratory, X-ray, electrocardiogram and pulmonary function tests), 46,200 medical clearances, 1,085 medical evacuations, 24,300 sick leave cases, 800 medical compensation and disability cases (Advisory Board on Compensation Claims and the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund), and 430 recommendations in regard to dependency allowance for disabled children and special education grant for children with disabilities.

183. The Office of Human Resources Management provides technical oversight of 42 United Nations dispensaries and 54 medical facilities in peacekeeping missions and maintains contact with 795 United Nations examining physicians worldwide.

184. Recently the Office has been implementing a comprehensive electronic occupational health management system, allowing computerized workflow

management and movement towards electronic medical records as opposed to paper files. This would greatly enhance the capacity to administer the medical issues of a mobile workforce, linking widely dispersed medical facilities.

185. The Office will continue to service the growing demand for both clinical and medico-administrative services and intends to realign its strategy to emphasize a more modern health promotion-based occupational health-care service. The modern promotion-based occupational health service entails the following elements:

(a) Advising the Organization and staff on health issues to ensure that the highest standards of health and safety at work can be achieved and maintained;

(b) Ensuring that the Organization is placing and maintaining staff in an occupational environment adapted to their physiological and psychological make-up and adapting work to people and each person to his or her job;

(c) Assessing health risk for all staff in all occupational groups at all locations through periodic medical exams and other tools to protect staff from risks resulting from factors adverse to health;

(d) Promoting health to enable people to increase control over and improve their health and to ensure the highest degree of physical, mental and social well-being of all employees.

186. The modern promotion-based occupational health service would be realized in concert with efforts to establish health care as an independent organizational and management priority.

187. The range of available options and models for the provision of health care in the field would be expanded to allow more flexibility in relation to specific local needs.

188. Emphasis would be given to designing, motivating and implementing an organizational health-care management system that allows effective support, oversight and monitoring of the health-care services needed to support a mobile field-oriented workforce.

V. Conclusion

189. **The actions to be taken by the General Assembly are as follows:**

(a) **To take note of achievements to date to implement the human resources management reform programme and planned future directions described in the present report;**

(b) **To draw attention to the reports of the Secretary-General on recruitment and staffing in the United Nations: strategy going forward (A/63/285), the implementation of the mobility policy (A/63/208), detailed proposals on streamlining United Nations contractual arrangements: a way forward (A/63/298), amendments to the Staff Regulations (A/63/189) and administration of justice (A/63/132).**